



# FELIX KELLY

*A Kiwi at Brideshead*

6 December 2008 - 26 April 2009

## **Felix Kelly – A Kiwi at Brideshead**

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2008 – Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2009

Exhibition opening: Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December, 5.30pm

*Felix Kelly: a Kiwi at Brideshead* – is the latest Hawke's Bay Museum and Art Gallery project to reconnect an important designer/artist with the contemporary New Zealand viewing public.

Auckland born, Felix Kelly (1914-1994) fled New Zealand as a young man for the bright lights of London. He never returned, but, unlike other New Zealand expatriate painters who quickly removed their homeland from their subject matter, Kelly kept painting an increasingly misremembered New Zealand which with each new work became a more and more fantastical place.

Kelly established himself as a graphic designer in 1930s London before moving seamlessly into stage and interior design in the 1950s. All this time he was also establishing himself as a painter of note. Initially exhibiting alongside Lucian Freud and Julian Trevelyan – and on one occasion Frances Hodgkins – Kelly soon developed a romantic, surreal style entirely his own, and cultivated a rich, upper-class clientele whom he supplied with house portraits, straight or strange as they preferred. In this his career bore a startling resemblance to that of Charles Ryder in the Evelyn Waugh novel, *Brideshead Revisited*. His work is largely to be found in private collections in Britain and the United States. Although an increasing interest is being shown here in his homeland, only Christchurch Art Gallery purchased a work from the artist in his lifetime.

Focusing on Kelly's output until the mid 1960s, the exhibition ranges from paintings to book illustrations, and from cartoons to design for the stage. Seen together for the first time, this body of work shows Kelly to have been an artist of whimsical imagination and invention. It also adds a new complexity and depth to New Zealand's art history.

The exhibition, curated by Dr Don Bassett, consists of over 100 works including paintings, cartoons, book illustration and stage design.

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2pm  
**Gallery Floor Talk with Curator**  
Join the curator Dr Don Bassett in the Gallery for a guided tour of the exhibition.  
Free entry

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> February, 10.30am  
**Art Deco Weekend Learned Lecture**  
Cost: \$7 (Tickets available from HB MAG or the Art Deco Trust)  
Exhibition curator Dr Don Bassett will give an entertaining and informative illustrated talk about Felix Kelly and the associated exhibition as part of the Art Deco Weekend Festival.

For more information or to arrange a photo opportunity please contact:

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